

If you set great store by your wine collection, it's important to look after it properly.

bottled up



In control: Liebherr Wtes 4177 GrandCru

HERE ARE MANY places you can store wine: under the

bed; in a cupboard; or in racks around the kitchen. But if you care about what you're drinking and want to drink it in the best condition possible, it's worth considering storing

your wine correctly. In order to do this, the temperature needs to be constant (12°-18°C, the optimal being 13°-15°C), the atmosphere shouldn't be too dry (55-80 per cent humidity) and the wine needs to be kept free from ultraviolet light and vibrations.

If you have neither the space nor the inclination to invest in a custom-built cellar, the alternatives are either off-site storage or a climate-controlled wine cabinet. Many collectors use a combination of both, storing the bulk of their cellar offsite while keeping a wine cabinet stocked at home.

Wine cabinets come in many different sizes and designs, and they are transportable should you need to move. The largest models will hold about 500 bottles. The smaller, under-bench units hold about 40 bottles and, depending on the brand, have up to five temperature zones. In Australia, EuroCave and TransTherm are the market leaders. Other reliable brands include Kitchener, VinTec and Liebherr.

There are many good reasons to use off-site storage. It saves space, offers ideal cellaring conditions, security and racking for oversized bottles. It's also a great way of avoiding impulse and temptation.

Many companies in Australia offer cellaring. There are specialist wine-storage companies, such as Macpherson's in Melbourne and Wine-Ark in Sydney, which also offer a comprehensive range of wine-related services in addition to cellaring.